

Chairman Julius Genachowski
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Robert M. McDowell

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

WT Docket No. 11-65

July 12, 2011

Dear Chairman Genachowski and Commissioners:

As the chief law enforcement officers for adjoining North Carolina counties, we face similar issues in protecting and serving the public. While we come from different political parties, we share a common commitment to doing everything possible to uphold the law and ensure safety and security for the community and for our deputies.

That is why we strongly support any efforts that will improve mobile communications coverage, particularly in rural parts of our jurisdictions, such as the proposed merger of AT&T and T-Mobile.

We understand that the first benefit of the proposed merger will be better quality for voice calls and a stronger wireless network. We believe this will have an immediate positive impact for our citizens and for law enforcement personnel.

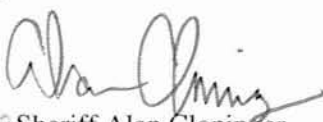

Dropped calls and spotty coverage areas are real problems that can have detrimental affects in rural areas of our counties. For example, scenes to which law enforcement responds are often not conveniently near a landline telephone. If the crime scene is not in an area with good wireless service, calling 911 for emergency assistance requires victims or witnesses to travel in search of a landline phone or better wireless reception. Stronger wireless coverage will speed emergency response, saving lives and increasing the chances of apprehending suspects.

Likewise, line deputies, who typically patrol alone, rely on their wireless phones to stay in touch with their families and to reach witnesses during investigations. Wireless phones also provide an important backup communications channel, especially in areas of poor two-way radio coverage. If a deputy does not respond via radio, we call their cell phone. If we can't communicate with them via cell phone, we immediately dispatch another deputy to ensure that they are safe or do not need assistance. A more robust cell phone network will improve the safety of these men and women who put their lives on the line for their communities every day.



In the longer term, we see substantial benefits from the expansion of mobile broadband technology. Investigators will have access to high-speed Internet in the field, just as they do at their desks. And, as more people use mobile phones in place of computers, expanded service will provide increased access to government services and resources, such as the information provided on the websites our offices maintain. Just imagine the safety implications of a parent able to search the state's sex offender registry while watching their child play in a rural park.

We know there are procedures which must be followed in reviewing a merger like this, just as there are procedures in a law enforcement investigation. Just as our departments try to work swiftly and efficiently to reach the proper resolution on every call and in every investigation, we hope you and your staff will do so as well so that our counties, and others like them, may receive the benefits of this proposal as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

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